

Harriet Harrison Merry, 90, passion for religions

Harriet Harrison Merry of Duxbury, whose round-the-world trip in 1938 gave rise to a life-long passion for the study of different religions, died on Tuesday, May 29, at the Wingate Care Center in Kingston. She was 90.

Mrs. Merry graduated in 1934 from the Madeira School in Virginia, and completed her degree at Wellesley College in 1938. She was rewarded by her father, Paul Henry Harrison, with a family trip around the world which featured visits to China, Japan, India and Egypt; a tour of Bali and a trip across the North African desert by chain-driven automobile.

The exposure to world religions this trip offered led Mrs. Merry to embark on graduate study of Oriental religions at the University of Michigan shortly after her return. She also served for a time on the staff of the 1939 New York

World's Fair. After earning her master's degree and as part of her studies towards the doctorate, Mrs. Merry was asked to give a lecture on Islam at Princeton University in 1941. In attendance at the lecture was the assistant chaplain of the university, Robert Merry. Rev. Merry was sufficiently impressed by the lecture that he asked to be introduced and within a year the two were married.

Mrs. Merry accompanied Rev. Merry on his various postings as an Episcopal priest, first as canon of the Episcopal cathedral in Buffalo, NY; and subsequently as a parish priest in Crafton, a suburb of Pittsburgh, Penn.

In 1948, the Merrys purchased a home in Duxbury, Rev. Merry's home town. For many years while Rev. Merry was rector in Crafton they and their children spent summers

in Duxbury.

Following several years in semi-retirement at the Church of St. Mary in Falmouth Foreside, ME, in 1978 Rev. and Mrs. Merry retired to Duxbury, where she pursued her studies and became involved in local affairs.

Mrs. Merry leaves two sons, Paul Merry, of Boston, and Michael Merry, of Sacramento; two daughters, Lucinda Merry-Browne of Annapolis, and the Rev. Elva Merry-Pawle of Westfield; seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. She was the wife of the late Rev. Robert Merry, to whom she was married for 67 years.

Funeral services were held on Saturday, June 2 at St. John's Episcopal Church. Donations in lieu of flowers may be made to the Sisters of Saint Margaret Haitian Mission. For information call Paul Merry at 617-909-4339.